



**NOAA Teacher at Sea**  
**Kazu Kauinana**  
**Onboard NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE**  
**May 8 – May 23, 2006**

**Mission: Fisheries Survey**  
**Day 8: Tuesday, May 16, 2006**

**Weather Data from Bridge**

Latitude: 28, 23.9 N  
Longitude: 178, 25.0 W  
Visibility: 10 NM  
Sea wave heights: 2-3  
Sea swell heights: 3-4  
Seawater temperature: 24.0 C  
Sea level Pressure: 1/8 Cumulus

**Science and Technology Log**

Today we began to off load gear and seven personnel onto Green Island, the main island of Kure Atoll, as well as the farthest west and last island in the Hawaiian chain. This island did not experience any bird poaching or guano mining, but in 1960 it became a United States Coast Guard LORAN (long-range navigation) station. The major features of the station were a barracks, a signal/power building, a transmitter building, a pump house, seven fuel tanks, a 4,000-foot-long runway and a 625-foot-high LORAN tower. The only features remaining are parts of the barracks and the runway, which is unused and disintegrating. There is also a small pier that is being used by the researchers. It is now a wildlife refuge under the jurisdiction of the Hawaii Fish and Game Department.

The island is heavily vegetated with not only shrubs, grasses, and crawling vines, but also several kinds of trees. Verbesina is now growing out of control and a landscaper is a part of this crew to eradicate this invasive species. It grows so thick that it does not allow ground nesting birds like the Blue Faced Booby to utilize them. It also poisons the ground so that other plants cannot grow where they have established themselves.

I should mention that this is not a quarantine island like Laysan, Lisianski, and Pearl/Hermes. Too many invasive species had been brought in with the development of the station to warrant that designation. One of the invaders is a crawling weed with half-inch thorns and easily goes right through your slippers. When the girls opened the barracks to check it out, it was filled with cane spiders on the walls and ceiling; and the floor was covered with a carpet of dead ants that the spiders had eaten. There are also rats and at one time there was a dog, left there by a rescued shipwrecked crew. However, it was eaten by a crew that was shipwrecked later on. The atoll is notorious for shipwrecks.

I saw turtles and seals too. In fact, I had to get out of the water several times because the seals would swim towards me to see what I was doing there. We always had to steer clear of all the animals so as not to disturb them or have them become familiar with humans.

Green island is located on the inner side of a large ring of reef. Within this reef, it is relatively shallow and outside the ring it is very deep; rough water on the ocean side and calm on the lagoon side; and sloping fine sand beaches on the inside and coarse and rugged on the ocean side. The camp and pier are on the lagoon side of the island.

Most of the day I was a “mule,” carrying six months worth of supplies from the shuttling Zodiac to the spider’s nest (the barracks). Lots of thorns, soft fine sand, hot sun, but no ticks.

At the end of the day I was rewarded by being allowed to visit the "AHU" (alter or shrine) that the crew from the Hawaiian sailing vessel, *The Hokulea*, had built on a recent visit to this island. It is located in a spectacular site on the wild ocean side of the island just up in a safe spot from the water’s edge. It is comprised of several large coral heads comfortably arranged with a Hawaiian adze placed in the middle, inscribed with the title “NAVIGATING CHANGE.” I was deeply moved!

Malama Pono, Kazu